

**PROLONGED SURVIVAL OF A RELEASED
ALLIGATOR IN PENNSYLVANIA
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PROLONGED SURVIVAL OF A RELEASED ALLIGATOR IN PENNSYLVANIA.—The remarkable survival of a released alligator through six or seven Pennsylvania winters has been brought to my attention by David McNary, D.V.M., of Castle Shannon, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania. While it is regrettable that more exact dates could not be ascertained, it is verified that a pet alligator measuring "nearly a foot and a half" was released in a local marshy area during the summer of 1942 or 1943. An alligator was frequently seen in the marsh through the next several years, and its presence there became a matter of common knowledge among local residents. During the spring of 1949, a highway construction crew was engaged in building a roadway over the marsh. Several times the men were startled by suddenly encountering an alligator, until the foreman of the crew had a local peace officer shoot the animal. Dr. McNary, who was then veterinarian at the Highland Park Zoological Gardens in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, examined the carcass, found it to measure "nearly five feet," and identified the reptile as an American alligator, *Alligator mississippiensis* Daudin. While there is no way to establish definitely that the alligator killed in 1949 was the one released in 1942 or 1943, the circumstances strongly suggest that this is the case.

Meteorological data (Rockwood, Henry. 1952. *Local Climatological Summary with Comparative data, 1951, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania*. U. S. Dept. Commerce, Weather Bureau. Chattanooga.) recorded by the weather station at the Allegheny County Airport, five air miles from Castle Shannon, shows that for the seven-year period from 1942 to 1949 the mean temperature (in degrees Fahrenheit) for the coldest month varied from 21.7 to 35.2 (av. 26.5); the mean temperature of the coldest four months varied from 31 to 37.9 (av. 32.9); and the days below zero from 0 to 4 (av. 2.4). Thus it is noted that the mean temperature reading for one third of each year survived by the alligator hovered around the freezing point. Since the American alligator is known to hibernate in the northern extremes of its normal range, it may be presumed that this physiological device preserved the life of the individual in question through winters of a length and severity far beyond those normally experienced by this species.—A. J. Barton, The Stony Brook School, Stony Brook, Long Island, N. Y.